

THE PATH AHEAD

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Let's clear the path ahead.

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GOLDEN YEARS: STAYING HAPPY AND HEALTHY AS YOU GROW OLDER

When you think about growing older, what do you imagine? For some, they worry that getting older is an unpleasant experience and life will only go downhill after a certain age. But the reality is, older people can – and do – live vibrant, healthy and happy lives! Betsy Abramson, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA), believes that when people take steps to look after their health and well-being, their golden years can be filled with joy and purpose.



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“[Growing older] is not something to be dreaded,” says Betsy. “It’s something to be looked at positively and as a bonus you benefit from.”

One of the first steps in aging well is to take care of your health. This means making sure you eat plenty of nutritious foods; quitting unhealthy habits, such as smoking; getting regular check-ups from your doctor; and most importantly, making exercise a regular part of your day. While any physical activity is good, some types of exercises are particularly helpful for older adults.

Tai chi and gentle forms of yoga are a great low-impact way to get your body moving and increase your energy. Also, focusing on balance and strength exercises is a fantastic way to reduce your risk of falls.

TMG has partnered with WIHA to share information about the Stepping

On workshops offered throughout Wisconsin. These evidenced-based classes have proven to decrease falls and increase opportunities for individuals to remain safe in their homes. Also, many gyms, community recreation programs and senior centers offer exercise classes specifically for older adults.

Even if you haven’t made your health a priority before and think it’s too late to change, Betsy believes that shouldn’t stop you from taking steps to lead a healthier life.

“It’s never too late,” says Betsy. “Let’s get started now!”

Another very important part of aging well is to make your days meaningful. It can be very easy to isolate ourselves in our homes, so look for enjoyable opportunities that get you out into your community. This could include volunteering at a local non-profit



organization or place of worship, or taking a class at the local community center to explore your hobbies and interests. It's also important to spend time with those you care about, and to be open to making new friends. When you make an effort to enrich your life and share your talents with others, you get so much back in return.

“Look at aging not as a time of lost youth, but as a time of new opportunity,” says Betsy.

With the right attitude and resources, anyone can feel empowered as they enter this next stage of life. Enjoy the journey!

RESOURCES FOR AGING WELL

As you grow older, you may be unsure of the best way to approach this stage of your life. Don't go it alone! Here are some fantastic resources that can help you make this chapter of your life a great one. To access the links to these websites, visit tmgwisconsin.com/resources-for-aging-well, or simply click on the titles below if you are reading the online version of *The Path Ahead*.

AARP Wisconsin AARP is a national organization for people aged 50 years and older, which provides advocacy, resources and discounts on eye glasses, hearing aids, restaurants, travel and other entertainment.

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Your local ADRC can give you information about aging or living with a disability, including available resources for in-home care, home modifications, meal delivery programs, transportation options and more.

Alzheimer's Association This organization provides resources, support and education for those with Alzheimer's and dementia, and for their loved ones.

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) This organization helps people who are aging and their loved ones learn how to advocate for themselves, understand elder law, find assistance in their communities and more.

Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long-Term Care This state advocacy board provides a voice for older citizens and those in need of long-term care. The site offers helpful publications as well.

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) This organization offers evidence-based prevention programs for people who are aging and their caregivers so that they can live healthy and full lives, including the Stepping On program, which teaches people how to prevent falls.



DALLAS' STORY: THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT

Sometimes as people grow older, they need to find a good partner who can help them stay independent and remain safe and healthy. For Dallas Choat, teaming up with TMG and his fantastic TMG IRIS Consultant and Self-Directed Personal Care (SDPC) Nurse has let him live life on his terms, and has kept him from moving to a nursing home.

Two and a half years ago, Dallas, a 70-year-old man living in Green Bay, was having trouble taking care of himself on his own. He wasn't eating well. He also wasn't getting out of his house much, and he had a few falls from tripping over wires on the floor. While Dallas didn't want to rely on other people, he knew it wasn't safe for him to do everything on his own anymore.

“If I try to help myself, I hurt myself more,” says Dallas. “Finally, you hurt yourself so many times you say, ‘Jeez that hurts!’”

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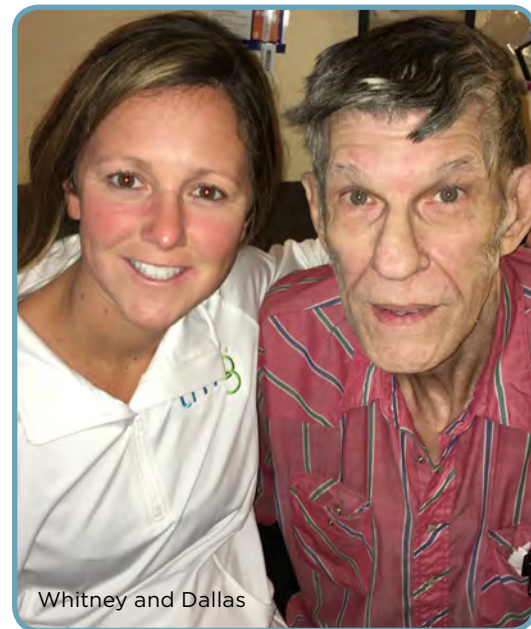
Dallas didn't have anyone nearby who could help him, and knew if he couldn't find help to live independently, he would have to move back to the nursing home; and he had no interest in doing that again. So, he enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency and chose the IRIS Self-Directed Personal Care option so that he could self-direct his long-term care services and supports. With the help of his TMG IRIS Consultant, Whitney, and his SDPC nurse, Pang, Dallas found a safer place to live, a support worker, Jennifer, who makes sure he has good meals and gets out in his community, and other resources that help him live an independent life.

“[Sometimes] your track runs a little crooked,” says Dallas “But TMG gets you a little straighter on track.”

Dallas feels like someone is finally listening to him and cares about him. When he joined TMG and started working with Whitney and Pang, he felt

that they wanted to get to really know him and were interested in his goals. For the first time in a long time, he felt that someone genuinely cared about him.

“Pang and Whitney have never made me feel less than perfect,” says Dallas.



Whitney and Dallas

LIVING WELL AT 100

Dallas says that because of the great support he has from TMG and the IRIS program, he's a happy man these days. While some older people might be worried about living on their own, Dallas says that if they can find a good support system, they can live out their golden years the way they want to.

“Reach out to somebody that actually cares,” says Dallas. “If they don’t care about you, find somebody that does. And what I found with TMG is they will not allow you to give up.”



This January, Edith Engelhart celebrated her 100th birthday. The day was filled with family and friends at a party in her honor at the town community center.

Edith continues to live, as she has her whole life, on her Northern Wisconsin family farmstead. She credits IRIS and the TMG ICA with making it possible for her to get the in-home support she needs to live alone in the home she’s always known. She loves sharing stories with her TMG IRIS Consultant, Lori, (pictured left) and IRIS SDPC RN, Dawn, (pictured right) about the history of the area and the changes she has seen. She also enjoys the wildlife outside her window, her large family and living her life as she chooses.

Happy Birthday, Edith!



MEET EVELYN AND NANCY: THE FAMILY THAT STAYS TOGETHER

Aging well in place can mean different things to different people. For Evelyn Benjamin, it means surrounding herself with loved ones and having the choice of where and how to spend her days. Thanks to her supportive family and a little help from TMG, she's able to do just that.

One of the first things you notice about Evelyn, who turns 85 in May, is her warmth. She's filled with compassion and is happy to share it with everyone she meets. She's also quick to laugh, and has a fantastic sense of humor. When Evelyn and her late husband, Tony, started having health problems about 15 years ago, they moved in with their daughter, Nancy, and her young family, who live in Glendale. To help out her parents, Nancy, who shares her mom's kind spirit, started working only part-time at her job so she could spend more time caring for her parents.

After Tony passed away and Evelyn started having more falls around the house, Nancy left her job so she could

better support her mother. When the family started worrying that they couldn't afford for Nancy to stay home, they looked for ways to help fund Evelyn's care. So, two years ago, Evelyn enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency.



“I am very grateful for everything they've done for us,” says Evelyn.

The family's goal is keeping Evelyn home, and without the help of the IRIS program or TMG, she says that probably wouldn't be possible. It also gives Evelyn the option to hire respite care for Nancy from time to time when she needs a little break, which is beneficial for both mother and daughter.

“I like being able to help my mom and know that she's getting the care she needs,” says Nancy.

Of course, growing older has its challenges. There are things that Evelyn has trouble doing or isn't doing anymore – she uses a walker, her health is declining and she no longer drives. While these limitations can be frustrating, Evelyn also finds ways to contribute. She helps out where she can,

such as folding the laundry or cooking with Nancy. She's also a great companion for the family, and they love the wisdom she shares.

Evelyn appreciates being able to live where she wants and getting to make her own choices, like picking out the clothes she wears, eating the food she likes and spending her days the way she wants. For her, that means reading a good book, watching her favorite TV shows like Wheel of Fortune and of course, spending time with friends and her family.

**“I'm so grateful,
says Evelyn.**

**“I can stay home
and have someone
to really care
for me.”**

YOUR MEETING PLACE 2018!

Last year, TMG hosted a series of events called Your Meeting Place. These fun-filled community gatherings brought together local people enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency, service providers and TMG staff.

Because we heard that people found these events to be so valuable, we're bringing them back in 2018! **Here are some of our upcoming Your Meeting Place Events:**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Autism Society of Wisconsin's Annual Conference

April 19-21, 2018 | *Kalahari Resort Wisconsin Dells, WI*

Circles of Life Conference

May 3-4, 2018 | *Paper Valley Hotel Appleton, WI*

Alzheimer's Association 32nd Annual Wisconsin State Conference

May 6-8, 2018 | *Kalahari Resort Wisconsin Dells, WI*

Wisconsin Employment First Conference

May 22, 2018 | *Kalahari Resort Wisconsin Dells, WI*

Your Meeting Place at the Zoo

May 16, 2018 | *Zoofari Conference Center Milwaukee Zoo - Milwaukee, WI*

Your Meeting Place Eau Claire

June 18, 2018 | *Chippewa Valley Technical College - Eau Claire, WI*



Check out tmgwisconsin.com/events for up-to-date information about where to find these and other great events in 2018. We hope to see you there!

Senior Americans Day

June 5, 2018 | *Katherine Thomas Hall, UW-Eau Claire - Eau Claire, WI*

Wisconsin Healthy Aging Summit (Hosted by WIHA)

June 7-8, 2018 | *Wilderness Resort Wisconsin Dells, WI*

Aging Empowerment Conference

June 14-15, 2018 | *Crowne Plaza Hotel Madison, WI*

Join InControl Wisconsin and international empowerment expert, **Dr. Simon Duffy at the Aging Empowerment Conference**, to learn ways to keep your independence as you age. 7



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WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

At the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA), we value the fact that our employees live and work in communities all around Wisconsin. Our Area Associate Directors provide local leadership for our TMG IRIS Consultant Teams throughout the state. If you have questions about TMG and the services we provide, please visit our website at tmgwisconsin.com for more information.



Questions about IRIS,
call: **1-800-223-6048**



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